(i) Set up a body to coordinate and address all the conservation and development challenges of the three World Heritage properties in the Agra District by involving all the stakeholders.

(ii) Evaluate and redefine the World Heritage protective boundaries and management guidelines pertaining to the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

(iii) Integrate the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort as one protected World Heritage area to ensure better management of the property, with a possible inclusion of Fatehpur Sikri subject to a broader regional planning scheme.

(iv) Elaborate a comprehensive site management plan, including a specific visitor management plan, based on a regional plan for conservation and development of the World Heritage properties, and ensure its implementation.

(v) Improve the on-site interpretation and visitor management at the World Heritage properties.

(vi) Set up on-site monitoring mechanisms, to assess the impact of urban development on the World Heritage values of the properties and their surrounding areas so as to integrate the protection of urban landscape into the overall heritage protection mechanism.

(vii) Organise a National Workshop on the elaboration of Site Management Plans for the preparation of the World Heritage extension(s), including the upgrading of the protective boundary and buffer zones.

(c) Steps are being taken for preparation of comprehensive site management plan for all the three World Heritage Sites.

Progress in poverty alleviation

*280. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

Will the Minister of URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country has made the most notable progress in poverty

alleviation while registering a healthy growth rate among the other South Asian Countries as per the report of the World Bank revealed in the publication "Annual Bank Conference on Development of Economics, 2003";

(b) if so, whether according to the report about 40 per cent of the world's poor are in south region;

(c) if so, whether the World Bank has agreed to provide all necessary assistance to the country to further reduce the poverty, and

(d) if so, the aid the World Bank has agreed to provide to the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) The World Bank has reported that the book "Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics 2003" edited by Sadiq Ahmed and Suman Bery is not an official publication of the World Bank, but an edited volume of individual contributions to this conference published by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). In the introduction to the volume by the editors there is a statement "South Asia has made solid progress in poverty reduction in the 1990s, based on a strong growth performance. The growth impetus and poverty impact were most notable in India." The same introduction states that 40 per cent of the World's poor live in South Asia.

(c) and (d) The World Banks' Country Assistance Strategy for India seeks to scale up assistance to the Government of India to reduce poverty.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Varanasi as heritage city

†2006. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to include Varanasi in heritage city category; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) (a) No, Sir. There is no provision in the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules 1959, for notifying heritage cities.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.